Trade with Saudi Arabia

†3007. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL:
PROF. R.B.S. VARMA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are considering to enhance trade with Saudi Arabia;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of goods being exported from India to Saudi Arabia at present; and

(d) the amount of foreign exchange earned by India from this export during last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) and (b) To enhance bilateral trade with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which has Saudi Arabia as one of the member countries, it has been decided to have negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with GCC.

(c) At present 96 categories of commodities are exported from India to Saudi Arabia.

(d) Exports from India to Saudi Arabia were valued at US $ 940.74 million, US $ 1123.31 million and US $ 1369.76 million during the year 2002-2003, 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 respectively.

Escorting US ships by Indian naval vessels

3008. SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that upon a request from Washington, Indian naval vessels have escorted US ships in Straits of Malacca in South-east Asia in recent time;

(b) the details of any pact or understanding between the navies of the two countries in this regard;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) whether Government is working on increasing international cooperation with both South-Eastern countries and USA as part of its maritime policy; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) In 2002, the Indian naval vessels, during their normal patrolling duty, provided escort to the ships of the United States of America passing through the Straits of Malacca to meet the challenge of possible terrorist attacks through the sea.

(b) to (d) The cooperation initiatives between Indian Navy and the navies of the South-East Asian countries and the United States of America provide for joint naval exercises, coordinated patrols, training exchanges, high level and working level visits and assistance in specific areas.

Victoria Cross

†3009. SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BAL APTE:
SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) details of recipients of 'Victoria Cross' in the country at present;

(b) whether it is a fact that there are so many people in the country in respect of whom an announcement was made to confer the said award on them but the award could not be conferred on them;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether these persons have requested the Government to cause the award to be conferred on them; and

(e) if so, the details of action being taken by Government to cause the award to be conferred on them?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Thirty Indians were awarded Victoria Cross during the First and Second World War as per the details at Statement I and II (*See* below)

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.